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ABSTRACT

This project was conducted as an experiment in the implementation of the guidelines set up by the agents' manual of the Texas study, SKILLS (Seniors and Kids Involved in Learning Life's Skills). Objectives of the intergenerational program included the following: (1) to further the work started by the SKILLS study, (2) to offer a variety of opportunities for helping the young and "young at heart" to develop new modes of communication, (3) to offer opportunities for interaction in a learning and helping atmosphere in a two-way relationship, (4) to develop guidelines for a learning laboratory, (5) to increase community involvement in the Cooperative Extension Service, (6) to enhance the spirit and mental well-being of older adults, (7) to develop an advisory planning committee, and (8) to identify and catalog the senior citizen organizational network within Prince George's County. Guidelines and recommendations are given for compiling the senior citizen network guide, contacting 4-H teenagers, contacting senior citizens, and bringing each together for some type of activity. (The SKILLS program description and questionnaires used by the project are appended.) (LRA)

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4-H INTERGENERATIONS PROJECT

A Summary Report

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Volunteer Intern
National 4-H Intern Program

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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Section I: Purpose and Objectives

4-H Intergenerations Project was conducted as an Extension of the Texas Study "SKILLS - Seniors and Kids Involved in Learning Life's Skills"[1] as an experiment in the implementation of the guidelines set up by the Agent's Manual designed by that study. (see appendix #1)

Objectives:

1. To further the work started by the Texas Study, "Seniors & Kids Involved in Learning Life's Skills."
2. To offer a variety of opportunities for helping the young and "young at heart" to develop new modes of communication.
3. To offer a variety of opportunities for interaction in a learning and helping atmosphere in a two-way relationship.
4. To develop guidelines for a learning laboratory providing training, leadership development, citizenship and group coordination.
5. To increase the community involvement in all phases of Cooperative Extension Service activities.
6. To enhance the spiritual and mental well-being of older adults in the community through various projects with the youth in the community.
7. To develop guidelines for and set up an Advisory Planning Committee, made up of teenagers representing 4-H and senior citizens who reside in the county.
8. To identify and catalog the senior citizen organizational network within Prince George's County, Maryland.

Section II: General Plan of Action

In order to more easily implement the project it was necessary to divide the project up into four basic components:

- compilation of the Senior Citizen Network Guide
- contact and organization of the 4-H teenagers
- contact and organization of senior citizens
- the point at which each is brought together in some type of activity

The general format for the program is outlined on page 2.

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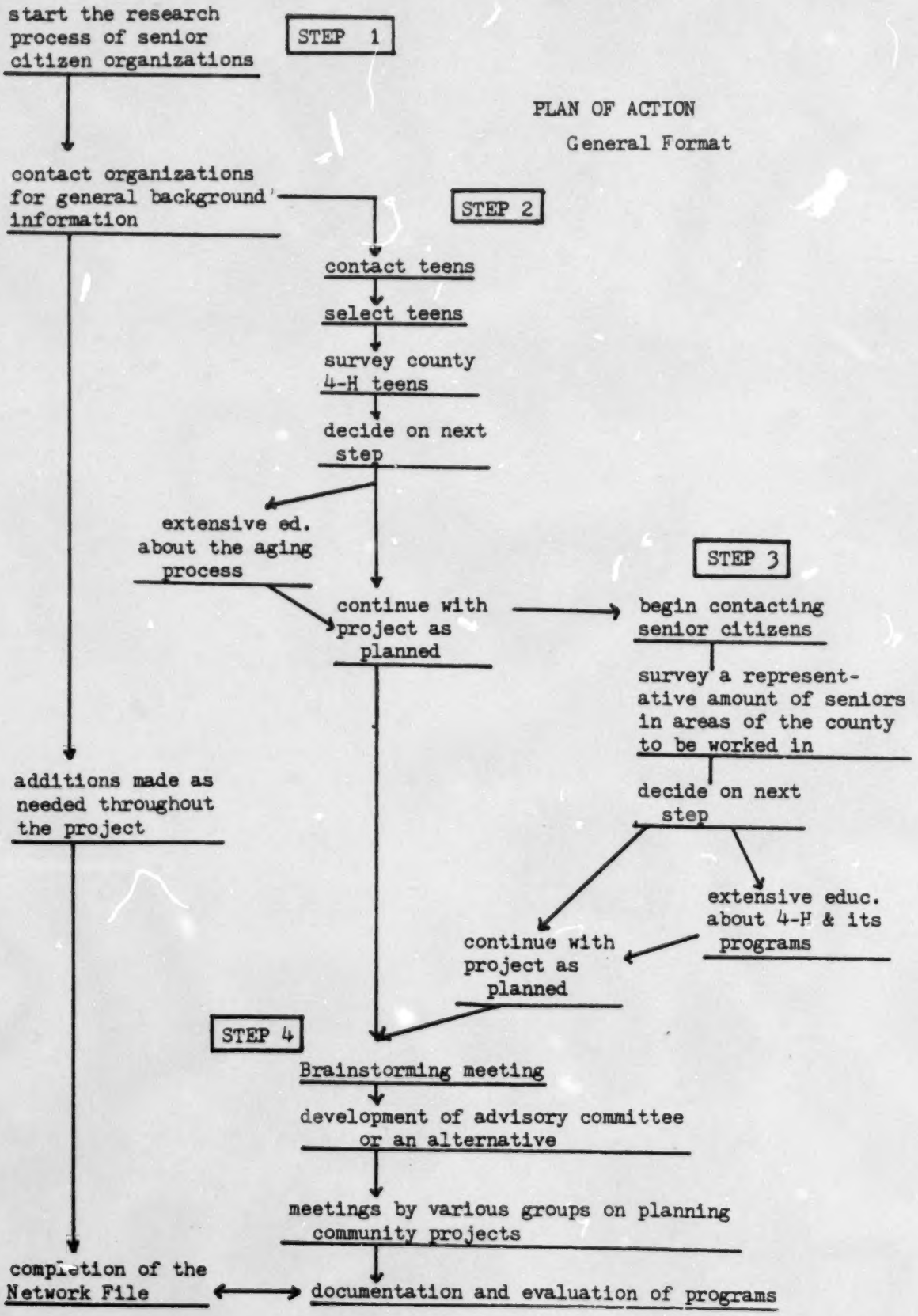
[1]"Seniors & Kids Involved in Learning Life's Skills," Texas Agricultural Extension Service, The Texas A & M University System, Daniel C. Pfannstiel, Director, College Station, Texas, 1977.


start the research process of senior citizen organizations
STEP 1
PLAN OF ACTION
General Format
contact organizations for general background information
STEP 2
contact teens
select teens
survey county 4-H teens
decide on next step
extensive ed. about the aging process
STEP 3
continue with project as planned
begin contacting senior citizens
survey a representative amount of seniors in areas of the county to be worked in
decide on next step
additions made as needed throughout the project
extensive educ. about 4-H & its programs
continue with project as planned
STEP 4
Brainstorming meeting
development of advisory committee or an alternative
meetings by various groups on planning community projects
completion of the Network File
documentation and evaluation of programs

Senior Citizen Network Guide:

* Know who you are working with. Location of senior citizen groups and organizations is facilitated by looking in the right places:

    - state, local and federal governments (Department of Aging, Human and Community Resources, Department of Health and Welfare.)
    - recreation and park, or leisure services departments
    - universities and community colleges conduct adult and continuing education programs.
    - national senior citizen organizations (AARP/NTRA, American National Red Cross, The Legislative Council for Older Americans, etc.)
    - libraries contain listings of group rosters and sometimes provide community referral services.
    - local newspapers and senior citizen publications.
    - telephone directories - look under aging, elderly, senior citizens, local government, nursing and retirement homes, social services.

* Give yourself time to work on this part of the program; it is important to talk to the right senior citizen groups later in the project and doing in-depth research at this point will help.

* Senior Citizen groups were initially contacted in one of two ways; by telephone or by letter/questionnaire (see appendix #2).

* As contact was made with senior citizen groups in order to gather information, it was placed on the Network Forms (see appendix #3 and 4). This was for easy reference. Along with the Network Forms go the Project Forms (see appendix #5). The purpose of this form is to keep accurate records of activities which have occurred between senior groups and 4-H clubs to aid in the evaluation of program effectiveness.

* The senior citizen groups tended to break down into five main categories:

    - senior citizen agencies
    - senior citizen clubs and hobby clubs
    - senior citizen organizations
    - retirement and nursing homes
    - recreation and senior centers

Contact and organization of the 4-H teenagers:

* Selection:

    - chosen from a cross-section of the county and with recommendations from club leaders

- or -

- have club leaders bring topic into club meetings in order to initiate interest on a larger scale.

* Preparation:

  - meet with 4-H'ers to determine their needs and interests (see appendix #6).
  - help 4-H'ers to prepare for their meetings with the senior citizens by helping to build their confidence, and helping them to understand the issues facing the elderly in America today and the discussion of possible community projects that can be done by them and community senior citizens.

  Where necessary, implement educational programs to help 4-H'ers to understand:

  - the aging process
  - issues concerning America's elderly
  - planning for retirement

Contact and Organization of Citizens:

* Selection:

  - when locating older adults to work with this program you should look for those who exhibit some of these traits:

    - sincere interest in working with young people
    - some community or organizational background
    - demonstrate leadership skills
    - has time available to spend with the program

* Preparation:

  - it may be necessary in many counties to educate senior citizens as to the concept of 4-H; others may just need some updating information
  - meet with individual older adults or clubs to determine their community needs and those interests which relate to young people.
  - (See appendix #7)
  - A few points to remember when surveying a senior citizen group:

    - never conduct a survey where you have not been invited to do so
    - explain why and how the results will be used.
    - keep surveys short and uncomplicated.

* There are two basic types of senior citizen groups which have two very separate functions.

  1. Service - these are agencies like the Department of Aging, or recreation or senior centers; their main purpose is to provide services to the elderly who have few resources. The service agencies are almost always tax supported.

2. Social - these groups consist mainly of clubs; their fundamental goal is the social well-being of its participants, although many provide community and civic projects as a part of their overall program.

* It is for the most part this second category which will provide the most interest, the most leaders and program ideas to the project. Their membership is generally the healthiest and most financially stable. They have time available and are the most mobile of the senior citizen population.

Getting It All Together

* When both senior citizens and teenagers are contacted the next step is some type of meeting. This could be in the form of:

  - brainstorming
  - discussion groups
  - social activities
  - one-on-one meetings

* Out of these meetings should come some kind of list of community or individualized program ideas, in which 4-H and senior citizen groups can cooperate.

Advisory Committee

* Should be selected from among the most interested 4-H'ers and senior citizens in the program.

* Some level of committee is needed in helping the program grow, whether it be a committee of two or of twelve.

* Functions of this committee would include:

  - helping set priorities
  - keeping the Network Guide current
  - keeping records and data on projects' progress
  - helping groups and individuals contact others with similar interests

Section III: Recommendations and Implications

Recommendations:

* Senior citizen clubs very often meet only nine months of the year.
* A change-over in presidents of senior citizen clubs usually occurs in the fall of the year, but not necessarily every year.

* When contacting a senior citizen club, try to get to them after their first organizational meeting in September, but far enough before they break up for their summer vacation.
* Be prepared with hand outs to explain the 4-H concepts and how senior citizens can fit in.
* Don't be surprised by an initial low interest among 4-H'ers; they may need some encouragement and time.

Implications:

* Education of the aging process and its implications will need to become a major emphasis in the 4-H program.

* Involvement of senior citizens as leaders may lead to an interest in the participation of senior citizens as actual members of 4-H, needing research and experimentation in projects designed specifically for them.

YOU CAN DO IT!!

SKILLS - Seniors and Kids Involved in Learning Life's Skills

A summary of results of a special needs project conducted by the Texas Agricultural Extension Service Specialists in Family Life Education with 4-H members and older adults in two Texas counties.

OBJECTIVES of the 4-H and Senior Citizen Volunteer Project

- Identify needs of senior citizens that can be met through volunteer efforts in the 4-H program.
- Identify intergenerational projects and programs presently being conducted in the State that successfully meet needs of youth and older adults.
- Identify a variety of opportunities for young and old to teach and learn from one another in ways that are beneficial to both.
- Develop a format to encourage involvement of older adults as volunteers in the 4-H program and meet needs not currently met with existing projects.

An outcome of the project was the development of a manual for County Extension Agents' use in developing and conducting a SKILLS program at the local club level.

The program is based on the need for interaction between youth and older adults. Advantages of such a program include opportunities which broaden views and experiences:

- Boys and girls between the ages of 9 & 19 who belong to 4-H have an opportunity to gain information about a positive self-concept.
- Older adults, not parents of 4-H members, can contribute a new kind of leadership to the 4-H program. They can supplement the efforts of the traditional volunteer leaders by:
  - sharing their knowledge and experience,
  - participating in discussion groups, and
  - working as a 4-H member-older adult team on service or community service projects.
- Provide opportunities for the older and younger generations to learn about each other.
- Provide older adults the opportunity to communicate and relate to young people.
- Older adults can offer youth "time" for listening and sharing feelings and ideas. Older adults may become a sounding board for youth to discuss problems peculiar to their generation.

Specific instances of the SKILLS project meeting needs:

Needs of Older Adults	Needs Fulfillment
Nutrition	Working with the 4-H Foods and Nutrition project contributes knowledge of nutrition and helps with the consumption of a balanced diet.
Education	Projects are varied and require planning, researching, and sharing of experiences.
Health	Working with 4-H program offers opportunities for improving physical and mental health.
Housing	4-H projects can aid elderly homeowners in home maintenance and repair: community contacts regarding housing.
Retirement Role and Activities	4-H youth can develop innovative programs to involve older adults in services which utilize talents and skills.

There are other needs, such as employment, income, transportation, and spiritual and mental well-being which are met through this program.

Please See Back Side

SKILLS - Seniors and Kids Involved in Learning Life's Skills

HOW TO IMPLEMENT A PROGRAM

I. Conduct Rap Sessions with Separate Groups of Older Adults and Youth
   A. Ask direct questions about their feelings toward working, learning, and sharing with groups other than own peer groups.
   B. Ask about skills they and other people in community possess.

II. If interest is shown, select an advisory committee that can give leadership to a local effort to establish a project or initiate a program.
   A. Three older adults and three 4-H youth as representatives from existing committees or groups is recommended.
   B. Prepare members before the meeting of subject and your expectation of their contribution.

III. Work with the Advisory Committee.
   A. Study local, state, and national facts about older adults and youth.
   B. Study generational developmental needs and tasks.
   C. Conduct older adult interest survey (personal interviews, mail, or hand-out at a meeting).
      1. Ask simple questions of a sample of older adults to give you some information about needs, interest, talents, and skills possessed by older people.
      2. Analyze and categorize the answers from the older adults for use in planning.
   D. Determine the type of leaders needed – organization, project, activity, etc.
   E. Determine methods to use for local program.
      1. Discussion groups -- older adults and youth meet together and talk. Attitudes, values, issues, feelings, and anxieties may be discussed. Will probably be a series of six or more discussions. A maxium number of 12 members should be established -- could lead to a more formal group as defined later.
      2. Short-term projects -- an opportunity to participate in activities and experiences to allow the 4-H members to strengthen their understanding:
         – volunteer leader for a club or group invites an older adult to share a specialized skill or knowledge which is needed, such as quilting, lapidary, breadmaking, bookkeeping, etc.
         – older adults continues with club members until project is finished, usually six weeks.
      3. 4-H youth and older adults activity teams
         – team may be individual or groups
         – project may be a service project or a community-type project -- projects of this type may include activities such as decorations for hospital or nursing homes, working together with handicapped children, transportation for errands, caroling and other holiday celebrations, fund raising for 4-H and senior citizens groups, etc.

The ideas are numerous! YOU CAN DO IT TOO! The comments made by 4-H members and older adults at the conclusion of the project are evidence of the success of the projects Two example comments are given:

4-H member - "I didn't know there were this many interesting people in our area."
Older adult - "It has been a rewarding and reassuring look at youth locally."

Compiled by Claudia Williams, State Agent, Texas Agricultural Extension Service, for the Family Life and Youth Development Educational Session, National Extension Homemakers Council, September 21, 1978, Seattle, Washington.

QUESTIONNAIRE

In an effort to be as accurate and informative as possible we are asking that each agency and organization provide a brief description of itself. Please fill out this questionnaire as accurately as possible and return promptly to:

4-H Intergenerations Project
15209 Upper Marlboro Pike
Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20807
Attn: Brenda Minnich

1. Name, Address & Telephone Number of Organization_____

2. Purpose(s) and objectives(s) and primary function of organization_____

3. Geographic area served_____

4. How many people do you serve?_____

5. What facilities do you offer and where are they located?_____

6. What specific service(s) does your organization provide for the Aging?_____

7. Name and title of a contact person from your organization_____

8. Would your organization be interested in attending the preliminary planning meeting? Yes____ No____ If no, why not?_____

9. Would your organization be interested in being represented on the Advisory Planning Committee? Yes____ No____

Please be sure to return questionnaire even if your agency is not interested in participating on either of the committees. Thank you for your cooperation and for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

NETWORK FORM

name of agency Department of Services and Programs for the Aging- P.G. County

address Hampton Mall Shopping Center, Room 335
Post Office Box 512, Upper Marlboro, Maryland 20870

phone 350-6666

contact person Mrs. Shirley Wyvill Ms. Mary Galbreath

title Information & Referral Senior Citizen Newspaper-editor

short description of services:

-Tax Aid Programs
- Information and referral
- Senior Citizens Activity centers
- Senior citizens newspaper
- Transportation program (continued below)

population served:

15,000 to 20,000 of the 55,000+ elderly residents in Prince George's County

service area:

Prince George's County

facilities and location:

- activity centers
- Nutrition Sites
- Day Service Centers throughout the county

miscellaneous comments:

(continued from description of services)

-employment and emergency service section
- Foster Grandparents
- Retired Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
- Nutrition program
- supportive services
- senior service center
- Call-A-Ride
- Call-A-Person program
- Council of Senior Citizens Clubs

NETWORK FORM

name of agency Betterment for United Seniors

address 5706 Sargent Road,

Chillum, Maryland 20782

phone 853-2400

contact person Georgie Holden / Mary Ann Schulz

title President / director

short description of services:

to assist elderly in remaining independent in their community and allow them a sense of control over their lives
- outreach workers, one to one
- surveys, churches, clubs, conventions - gatering info
- sets up priorities

population served:

Prince George's County's senior citizen population

service area:

Prince Georges County

facilities and location:

Seniors provide advisory assistance to:
- Senior Health Center, 3717 38th Street, Cottage City, Maryland
- Senior Legal Aid Center, 3705 Rhode Island Avenue, Mount Rainier, Maryland

miscellaneous comments:

Advocacy:
- Social Services for the aged and home bound
- Public information and education
- Social action on Public Policy

PROJECT FORM agency_____ page___

Project #___ title_____ dates_____
groups/individuals who participated in the project:

project coordinator(s) - name and phone number:

short description of the project:

comments concerning the project:

Project #___ title_____ dates_____
groups/individuals who participated in the project:

project coordinator(s) - name and phone number:

short description of the project:

comments concerning the project:

Project #___ title_____ dates_____
groups/individuals who participated in the project:

project coordinator(s) - name and phone number:

short description of the project:

comments concerning the project:

QUESTIONNAIRE # 1

The 4-H Intergenerations Project which is being conducted in Prince George's County is a study designed to bring together 4-H youth, senior citizens and county agencies serving senior citizens. In order to discover the needs and interests concerning teenagers in Prince George's County this survey has been developed. Please complete all questions as fully as you can.

1. age _____ 2. Number of years in 4-H _____

3. In which 4-H Projects are you involved?_____

4. What organizations other than 4-H are you involved?_____

5. What kinds of things do you do "just for the fun of it"?_____

6. Do you have a career goal?_____(please explain)_____

7. Does the thought of getting old bother you?(please explain)_____

8. How many friends do you have who are older than 60 years?_____
   How often do you see them? _____

9. In general do you enjoy the company of most of the older adults that you have contact with?(why or why not)_____

10. What do you see as the greatest problems facing you and your friends, in todays society?_____

11. Do you think that it would be worthwhile for senior citizens and 4-H'ers to try to work on community projects together?_____(why or why not)

12. What kinds of projects do you think senior citizens and 4-H'ers could work on together?_____

13. Miscellaneous comments:_____

Optional: Name:_____
Address:_____
Phone:_____

QUESTIONNAIRE # 2

The 4-H Intergenerations Project which is being conducted in Prince George's County is a study designed to bring together senior citizen groups, 4-H clubs, and county agencies serving senior citizens. In order to discover interests and concerns of senior citizens in Prince George's County this survey has been developed. Please complete all questions as fully as you can.

1. age ( ) 50-65 ( ) 66-75 ( ) 76-85 ( ) 86 +
2. In what size town do you live? ( ) less than 10,000 people
   ( ) 10,000 to 50,000 people ( ) over 50,000 people
3. What hobbies do you enjoy?_____
4. Of which organizations, clubs or groups are you a member and in which do you hold leadership positions?_____
_____
_____
5. List some activities in which you would like to participate which might be provided by 4-H youth and are not now available in your area:
_____
_____
_____
6. Other than family, how many friends do you have who are under the age of twenty?_____
7. What do you see as the most important problem which faces teenagers in Prince George's County, today?_____
_____
_____
8. What do you see as your most important problem, as a senior citizen in Prince George's County? _____
_____
_____
9. What type of community project(s) would you like to see your organization or club and local 4-H clubs work together on?_____
_____
_____
10. Miscellaneous comments:_____
_____
_____

Optional:

Name:_____
Address:_____
_____
Phone:_____